



Washington State  
Conservation  
Commission



CONSERVATION DISTRICTS  
OF WASHINGTON STATE

*your window to healthy lands*


Washington State

# Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

A non-regulatory approach that has helped farmers voluntarily restore habitat along hundreds of miles of salmon-bearing streams in Washington without threatening farm viability.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

 **1,100**  
farmland sites voluntarily  
enrolled in CREP

**251**   
estimated jobs generated through  
CREP investments per biennium

 **283**  
miles of exclusion fencing installed

 **142**  
average width of riparian forest  
buffers (in feet)

**4.7 million**  
trees / shrubs planted 

**759**   
miles of stream length treated  
(one side)

## ABOUT

- ▶ Voluntary incentive program that compensates farmers for growing a different crop in riparian (streamside) areas of their property — that crop is salmon habitat.
- ▶ Farmers plant native vegetation to form a “buffer” between farmland and the stream and receive rental payments for the acreage planted.

## BENEFITS FOR SALMON

CREP buffers function as a natural “water treatment plant” that keeps water clean and provides habitat.

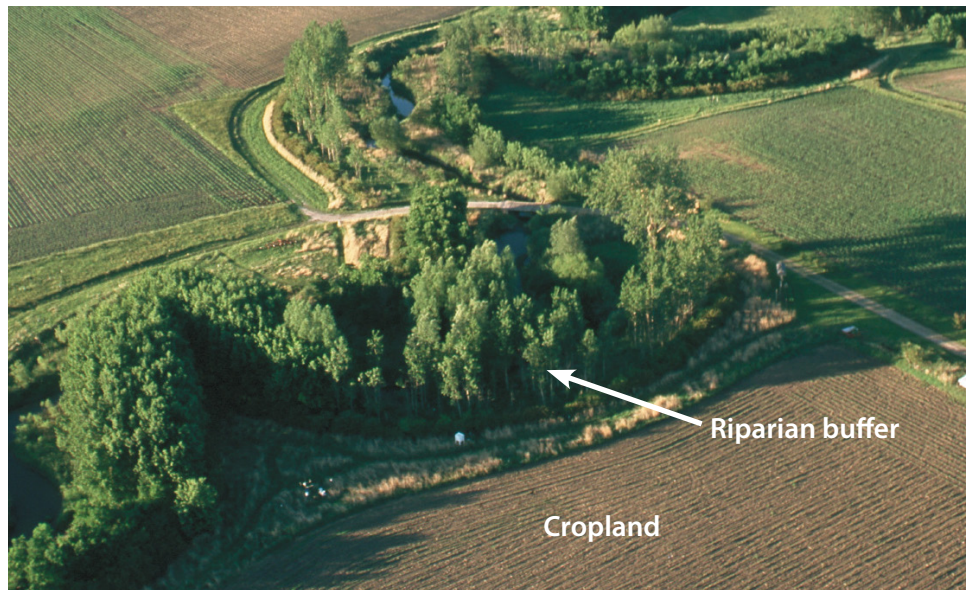
In watersheds with high levels of CREP participation, results include:

- ▶ Cooler summer water temperatures,
- ▶ Higher numbers of returning young and adult salmon, and
- ▶ More miles of accessible stream habitat.

## BENEFITS FOR THE ECONOMY

When farmers voluntarily enroll in CREP, economic benefits result for them and their community:

- ▶ Rental payments help farmers meet their bottom line.
- ▶ Federal and state investments in CREP projects translate into local jobs (e.g. engineering, construction) and income.
- ▶ Riparian buffers are a cost-effective way to prevent and mitigate flood damage.







## PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

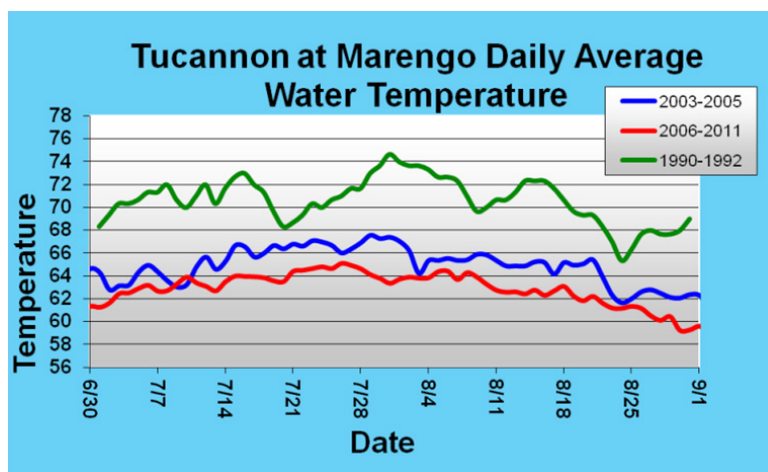
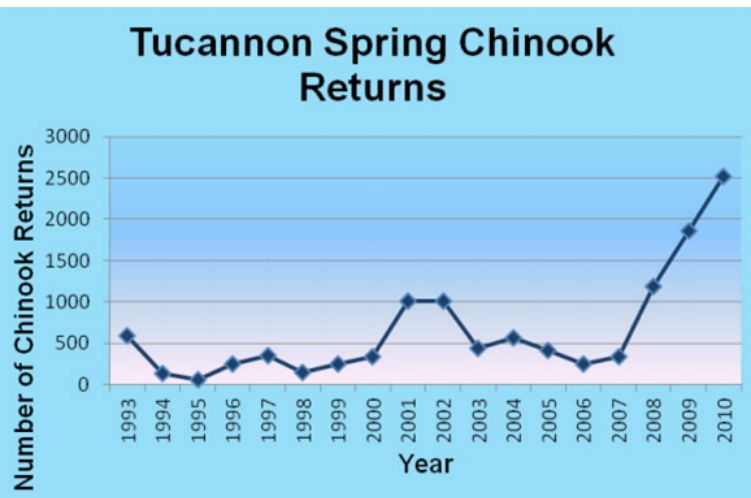
- Cooperatively administered by USDA Farm Service Agency and Washington State Conservation Commission.
- Conservation districts provide outreach, secure CREP contracts with landowners, and help with site planning, monitoring, and maintenance.

## SUCCESS STORY - TUCANNON RIVER

- Tucannon River system (southeast Washington) supports federally listed fish species, including steelhead, bull trout, and Chinook salmon.
- 1990s watershed assessment revealed threats to salmon habitat, including high water temperatures (sometimes over 80 degrees Fahrenheit), stream bank instability, lack of cover for rearing pools, and high levels of bacteria.
- Several landowners in the watershed enrolled in CREP as part of a collaborative effort to voluntarily restore the Tucannon.

### Results:

- » Landowners restored over 1,100 acres of riparian area, meeting 79 percent of the recovery goal.
- » Summer water temperatures dropped over 10 degrees Fahrenheit.
- » Young salmon use 20 miles of river that previously had been too warm.
- » Spring chinook runs are among the highest in 30 years. **The total run size increased from 54 fish in 1995 to 1,777 fish in 2015.**



## CONTACT

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SCC-CREP-02-18

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